

DYNAMITE FISHING, Tz press cuttings 2009-11

Government gets tougher on dynamite fishing

BY CORRESPONDENT, 4th November 2011

Omari Shemahonge, is a frequent buyer of fish at the Sahare fish collection centre in Tanga City. He normally buys the commodity from fishmongers who arrive at the centre as early as six o'clock in the morning. The traders make sure that they are there when the first dhow arrives from fish expedition which normally set off for the sea the previous night.

Equipped with a lantern and a spare container for kerosene, fishermen spend the whole night ashore, trying their luck in places where they think fish may be available. Shemahonge, an 80 year old retired blacksmith, previously employed by former Cargo Handling Services – now Tanzania Ports Authority (TPA), almost always complains of the spiraling prices of fish at the market. "I usually go there with a 2,000/- note. But what is given to me is just two or three small fish" says Shemahonge, who hails from Makorora location. Back home, the relish is cooked and used for lunch with nothing left for evening meal.

The scenario constantly creates squabbles with his wife, Mama Mwantumu, who always tells his husband that the consignment he buys at the market does not, in any way, suffice for both lunch and supper. In view of the high prices of fish at Sahare, Shemahonge has now decided to buy fish only once a week. "I can't manage buying fish as often as I used to", says the old man, adding "In the past few years, I used to visit Sahare market almost every day, but not now."

Unfortunately, Shemahonge does not seem to know why fish prices have, for some time now, been on the rise. "What I know is that fish catches depend on the weather. If there is too much wind and the sea is stormy, fish prices will be affected," asserts the old man. It is to be expected that whenever fish buyers go for purchases, even in town markets, they are always given the same reason. This is because when fishmongers buy the commodity from fishermen, they clearly know that some of the products they buy were killed by dynamites. "They are well aware that if they reveal that some fish were dynamited, the buyers would refrain from purchasing such lot," reveals Hussein Magongo, another regular buyer of fish at Sahare.

The Sahare fish receiving station, like the Deep Sea centre, a stone throw from the Tanga City Council, is an area full of filth. In most cases, one would notice a large consignment of small fish known as "uduvi", a yellowish specie, bought mostly by low income wananchi, spread on the sandy beach to dry.

A fishmonger who was also complaining of the spiraling prices of fish, Hamdan Bakari said: "prices of fish are now out of reach of most of us. In fact I doing this business only out of routine, but it is no longer profitable". He said the real cause of the scarcity is dynamic fishing practices which, according to him, the government had failed to control. "It is simply impossible to wipe out the vice, for how do you expect it to stop when the same people in government machinery are partners in the illegal undertaking?" he asked.

He said over-fishing using illegal gear, including fishing net with small holes was rampant. 'The problem with this type of nets is that they destroy the entire fish population in a particular area, irrespective of their age, from eggs to juvenile fish and other living organisms'. Bakari (70) said he started business as fishmonger at the age of 22, saying some few decades ago fish was available in large quantities and affordable in large to ordinary consumers.

"The real culprits are people with financial muscle who conduct the illegal business with impunity on grounds that they tame not only patrol teams but also some unscrupulous government officials," he revealed. "Tips are given beforehand that on such day, patrol would be carried out on the sea. With such information, how do you expect that one day the illegal practice will be controlled?"

Experts say that dynamite fishing is harmful to humans because some toxic remnants of chemicals used to manufacture the bombs are a health hazard. Dynamite fishing is also dangerous to marine life, including coral reefs which are breeding grounds for fish. Coral reefs are among the most critical marine resources in Tanzania as they support livelihoods for over eight million people living on the coastal line. Although illegal and highly dangerous, dynamite fishing continues to be in practice along most of the Tanzania coast- from Tanga to Kilwa and Pemba. THE GUARDIAN

What hit dynamite fishing campaign?

BY EDITOR, 10th October 2011

Once again the issue of dynamite fishing has reared its ugly head, this time in a more vicious and threatening manner. Not only are marine species in danger of wanton destruction, but so is the pipeline transporting natural gas from Songosongo, in Lindi region to power electricity generation plants in Dar es Salaam.

Crusaders against dynamite fishing say illegal fishermen and women are now conducting their activities around the gas pipeline, putting the vital economic installation at risk. They warn that if not checked the blasts might cause explosion of the pipeline and inflict further misery on the millions of Tanzanians, who are presently struggling to get out of protracted power crisis.

According to Mohamed Ibrahim Mgeni, one of the leaders of Somanga's Beach Management Unit (BMU) if the central and local government authorities do not step in to halt rampant dynamite fishing in Somanga Ndumbo, Cheketu, Nyamatungutungu, Somanga Mtama villages in Kilwa District, the gas pipeline may explode.

The alarm was raised at a forum organised by the Journalists' Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET), who brought together crusaders against dynamite fishing in the coastal regions to share their experience in the campaign.

Somanga's BMU chairman, Omari Bakari Nguyu says efforts by crusaders out to stop dynamite fishing have hit major snags, accusing local government authorities of being reluctant to cooperate with the campaigners. Not only are they refusing to cooperate, but it is alleged that some of the local leaders collude with the criminals after being given bribes.

Omari Bushiri, a local government leader and campaigner against illegal fishing from Tanga municipality unveiled shocking statistics on dynamite blasts in different parts of the coastal region over the last several years. He said more than 195 blasts occurred in 1994, 20 blasts every month in 2007, 40 blasts monthly in 2011.

He blamed the situation on poor enforcement of illegal fishing regulations and laws on the part of local government authorities, and lack of cooperation between and amongst organs involved in controlling illegal fishing in the areas.

According to Deodatus Mfugale JET Chairman dynamite fishing is done openly in Msasani, Fungu Yasini, Kimbiji, Yaleyale, Kisiju, Amani Govu and Jibondo in Dar and Coast regions; Moa, Kichelikani, Kigombe, Mwambani, Mwarongo in Tanga and Matapatapa, Njianne, Somanga, Pombwe and Jaja in Lindi region.

What is more, fishermen can now make their own explosives and don't have to source industrial dynamite, he said. Needless to say, these reports from the crusaders deserve an immediate response from the government. Specifically the government needs to act promptly to secure the pipeline before a bigger disaster befalls the nation.

The stakeholders led by the government, drawing further on the reports of the crusaders, must revisit the campaign against dynamite fishing, with a view to making it more sustainable in a bid to rid our coastline of the vice once and for all.

It is a shame to hear that Tanzania is the only country along the Indian Ocean with a problem of dynamite fishing, when a number of initiatives have been launched to end the menace. They say forewarned is forearmed. THE GUARDIAN

Dynamite fishing threatens gas pipeline

BY CORRESPONDENT, 6th October 2011



Dynamite fishing

Dynamite fishing at Songosongo in Lindi Region threatens to disrupt the pipeline transporting natural gas from the area for power generation in Dar es Salaam. Blasts are reported to have reached a critical stage in the area and other coastal areas across the country, putting lives of marine creatures and people in jeopardy. "The fishermen conduct their activities near the gas pipeline," Mohamed Ibrahim Mgeni, Somanga Beach Management Unit (BMU) leader informed a workshop in Dar es Salaam yesterday.

The workshop was organised by the Journalists' Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) to discuss the rising case of dynamite fishing. If the government authorities do not step in to halt the illegal activity at Somanga Ndumbo, Cheketu, Nyamatungutungu, Somanga Mtama in Kilwa District, the gas pipeline could explode, he said.

Declining fish species in the high seas have forced the remaining ones to hide under the pipeline, he said, adding that illegal fishermen now search for fish around the latter area with the aid of dynamites. Once it explodes, its adverse impact would not be felt by the 5,000 to 10,000 people living around the pipeline, but millions of Tanzanians who depend on it for power generation.

Somanga BMU chairman Omari Bakari Nguyu said efforts by crusaders to stop illegal fishing have hit a snag, saying local government authorities are reluctant to support them. "Some local leaders are colluding with the criminals and do not want to involve us (BMU) in the village development plans, including in the fight against illegal fishing," Nguyu said.

For his part, Omari Bushiri, a local government leader and a campaigner against illegal fishing from Tanga city said more than 195 blasts occurred in 1994, 20 every month in 2007 and 40 blasts monthly this year, blaming poor enforcement of fishing regulations and laws.

JET chairman Deodatus Mfugale said dynamite fishing is today done openly at Msasani, Fungu Yasini, Kimbiji, Yaleyale, Kisiju, Amani Govu, Jibondo (Dar, Coast), Moa, Kichelikani, Kigombe, Mwambani, Mwarongo (Tanga), and Matapatapa, Njianne, Somanga, Pombwe, Jaja (Lindi).

Due to lack of enforcement, he said every youth in the areas takes to dynamite fishing as an acceptable means of livelihood, noting: "Fishermen can now make their own explosives and don't have to depend on industrial dynamite."

He explained that dynamite fishing is more than an environmental problem. "In April this year, dynamite fishermen attacked a surveillance officer in Tanga with acid. He is now blind. In August, a patrol boat in Tanga was torched by dynamite fishermen. In 2009, a patrol boat donated by EU to Somanga ward was destroyed by pro-dynamite fishing activists," he said.

Asked for comment yesterday, deputy Energy and Minerals minister Adam Malima, thanked this paper for the news, vowing the government would protect the pipeline at all costs. "We have government authorities there. We are aware that dynamite fishing is illegal, but if it goes to the extent of destroying the gas pipeline --- that is destroying our very lives. We are going to instruct government authorities in the area to take action immediately," he said. THE GUARDIAN

Why Tanzania is losing the war against dynamite fishing menace

BY CORRESPONDENT, 6th September 2011

Dynamite fishing, a get rich quick but illegal venture, surfaced in the country's waters over four decades ago. Nobody can say for sure when the illegal activity took off and why, though some people associate it with population growth. What is, however, worrying is the fact that the gravity of the crime notwithstanding, the bandits have, all along, been regarded as heroes in society.

Most people living along fishing villages realize the hazards caused by dynamite fishing. Such people include fish mongers. If such is the case, why then do they seem to cherish the unlawful act? Why do they embrace the perpetrators? "It is not possible to expose the practitioners because, to most villagers, the bigger the catch the cheaper the commodity," according to Mwinyi Omari (80) a resident of Mwarongo village, Tongoni area in Tanga city.

Big catch, particularly those involving small fish and sardines killed through blasting, are normally loaded into carts conveyed by donkeys and sold openly in households through cities' or towns' streets. But what is baffling is the fact that fish killed by dynamites are easily noticed. In fact one does not need to hold a degree in fisheries.

Such fish bear clear big scratches in their bodies. Why then are fisheries officials and their assistants, as well as environmental conservationists, failing to identify the anomalies and deal with the fishmongers as appropriate?

'What does the law say?

Doesn't it require fisheries officers to constantly visit sea shores and markets to ensure products sold to consumers carry the requisite quality for sale?" questioned Antony Andrea, retired government official. But some villages doubt whether the vice will be contained in the foreseeable future. "It is difficult to wipe out the malice because some officials who are supposed to confront the practitioners in the vice, have joined hands in the activity," says a villager residing at Chongoleani, a fishing village on the Tanga -Mombasa road.

The villager's view is echoed by a government official working in the education sector in Tongoni Ward. "How do you expect officials engaged in the fisheries department, not only here, but also in other places, to harass the perpetrators of the vice when their incomes hardly satisfy their domestic needs? he queried. "There is already a network linking the bandits and some of patrol officials. The latter normally tip off the blasting team when patrol days are due so that they refrain from going ashore on such "dangerous" days.'

Some people believe that the officials colluding with the bandits may be doing so on noticing that courts of law have not been meting deterrent sentences to suspects taken to court for dynamite fishing. "The law says a person convicted for illegal fishing faces an instant penalty of 500,000/-, but in most cases the bandits have escaped with light sentences. How do you expect such people to abandon the vice when the punishments have no impact to them?" asked a retired fisheries officer who decided to remain anonymous.

With the government's resolve to eradicate poverty, through its various developmental strategies, much remain to be desired, as far as eradication of the vice is concerned. But some people are of the view that in order for the practitioners to abandon the crime, the government should devise ways to help them through formation of small scale ventures. "Those engaged in illegal fishing need to be assisted through establishment of small scale development projects so that they may abandon what they are presently doing" according to Amir Mshihiri, a city resident.

"Population growth is threateningly high. If the present trend of dynamite fishing is left to flourish, in a few years, fish stock will have drastically been depleted," says Mshihiri. He adds: "Perhaps the best way is to ensure that the young generation is made aware of the repercussions of illegal fishing through inclusion of the topic in school syllabuses."

Dynamite fishing is a serious activity in that it threatens the economy and the livelihood of small scale fishermen who earn their income through fishing. An 85 year's old resident of Tongoni, another fishing village on the Tanga -Pangani road, speaks bad of those engaging in illegal fishing, warning that deliberate efforts and not words, were needed to wipe out the deadly vice. "Many people are not aware that the acts of those engaging in illegal fishing now will have disastrous effects on future generations, he asserted, saying most of them were driven by the motive for quick money.

Another resident of the same village, Kombo Ali, says normally bandits carry their activities in deep sea. Kombo says when a single blast is released, over 60 per cent of various fish species die with most of them drowning - hence only 40 per cent is harvested. "The killed fish remain deep in the sea for sometime and later come afloat when they are already rotten".

Observers say, in some places notorious for dynamite fishing along the coastal line, at least ten blasts are blown out a day. When blasts are made, coral reefs, breeding habitation for fish, are extensively damaged, leaving fish desperate and homeless. Corals, extremely fragile creatures, are organisms which, when they die, form coral reefs. The creatures are most vulnerable, ostensibly caused by excess atmospheric carbon dioxide - itself responsible for temperature rise. THE GUARDIAN

Government intensifies fight against illegal fishing

Daily News, By LUDOVICK KAZOKA, 7th May 2011

A TOTAL of 607 suspects suspected with illegal fishing were arrested with 1,309 kilogrammes of different marine species between July 2010 and February 2011. Handing over 12 patrol speed boats worth 941m/- to five municipalities at Mbegani Fisheries Development College (MFDC) in Bagamoyo on Friday, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development, Dr David Mathayo, said the 24 cases on illegal fishing had already been filed to courts of law. "This demonstrates that the problem is still huge and the fight to combat illegal fishing should be strengthened," said the minister.

The speed boats were handed over to municipalities situated along the coast and different government departments implementing the Marine Coastal Environment Management Project (MCEMP). The six year MCEMP's initiative sponsored by the World Bank and The Global Environmental Facility aims at improving regulatory and institutional framework management of marine resource, largely establishing the links between the marine environment and fishery resources.

"The presence of the patrol boats at fishing areas will tremendously help to curb the illegal fishing problem," stated Dr Mathayo. The beneficiary municipalities are Mkinga, Pangani, Bagamoyo, Mkuranga and Lindi, while government departments include Marine Parks and Reserve Unit plus the Mangrove Management Unit, which are under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism.

He said through the project, the government had built capacity to the communities living along the coast in order for them to benefit from the fishery resources without harming the environment, saying the communities have been trained to carry out sustainable fishing. Dr Mathayo warned over the misuse of the boats, saying the government would not hesitate to take back a boat from any municipality or department which would misuse it, adding that the boat would be given to another municipal.

Mkuranga District Executive Director, Ms Sipora Liana, on behalf of other municipalities, thanked the government for the support, saying the boats were a big boost to the ongoing campaign against illegal fishing.

Spots notorious for illegal fishing exposed in Temeke

22 April 2011, By Lucas Liganga, The Citizen Chief Reporter

Dar es Salaam. Temeke District authorities in Dar es Salaam Region said yesterday they have identified hotspot areas off the city's coastal line where dynamite fishing is carried out. "We have identified areas that are notorious for dynamite fishing, and we are now organising a surprise operation to net the masterminds of the malpractice," said the Temeke district commissioner, Ms Chiku Galawa. Ms Galawa told The Citizen in a telephone interview that the identification of dynamite fishing hotspots was done last week by the district authorities in collaboration with the police and the Tanzania Peoples Defence Forces (TPDF).

She added that during the identification process, residents in the affected villages of Ngobanya, Kizito, Mbutu and Puna in Kimbiji Ward also offered pertinent information regarding a syndicate of the illegal fishermen. "What follows is action," she said, declining to give more information. She said that doing so might have alerted the network of those involved in the practice. However, Ms Galawa added that the district authorities would continue to work closely with villagers because the identification of dynamite fishing hotspots was a continuous process.

The chairman of the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET), Mr Deodatus Mfugale, said yesterday that a team of journalists from the association had started investigations to find out the extent of dynamite fishing off the country's coastal line. "We are currently in Tanga from where we would proceed to Lindi, Mtwara and Dar es Salaam regions where dynamite fishing is reported to be on the increase," he said when reached by phone.

Following reports of rampant dynamite fishing along the Dar es Salaam coast, TPDF offered to patrol the area a fortnight ago. Ms Galawa said the TPDF offer came during a meeting of the Dar es Salaam region's defence and security committee meeting. "Since TPDF is a member of the regional defence and security committee, it offered, during the meeting, to assist in patrolling the coastal waters," she said. "We have realized that some local government authorities are major hindrance towards the fight against dynamite fishing because they collude with the offenders," said the district commissioner. "Our patrols are intended to pinpoint weak points (areas that are infamous for dynamite fishing) and organize ourselves in arresting the situation," she said.

The minister for Livestock Development and Fisheries, Mr David Mathayo, said: "I am aware that dynamite fishing is a serious problem. But I have a message to the offenders that their days are numbered." Mr Mathayo said the government would very soon conduct a special surprise operation along the country's coastal line from Mtwara, Tanga to Dar es Salaam whose aim would be netting the fishermen. "We are about to launch a 45-day

special operation in Lake Victoria, after which we would move to the Indian Ocean coastline,” he said, declining to give more details. He said doing so amounted to alerting the culprits of their activities.

The minister said the offenders were even daring to use dynamite in ecologically fragile and protected areas for breeding fish. Following a survey by this newspaper that revealed widespread dynamite fishing, the acting Dar es Salaam regional commissioner, Mr Said Meck Sadick, had promised to discuss the malpractice during the defence and security committee which he chairs. The survey further revealed that dynamite fishing along coastal areas in Dar es Salaam was getting out of control again after former Livestock and Fisheries minister John Magufuli clamped down on the practice in 2009 and 2010.

More effort needed to end dynamite fishing

The Citizen, 11 April 2011



Tanzania is lucky to have many coral reefs that support extensive fishing besides attracting tourists. However, this natural endowment is endangered by dynamite fishing that abounds in large scale. Besides killing and injuring fish, it leaves behind rubble and broken corals on the sea floor, destroying the habitat for all reef species. Dynamite fishing is an old practice that has been common since the 1960s, and by the mid-1990s it became a matter of serious concern to environmentalists.

A high-profile national campaign involving hotel operators and the media brought international pressure and donor attention to this wanton destruction. This campaign, along with close community and peer group control, succeeded in curbing dynamite fishing to near zero levels between 1997 and 2003. However, by the end of 2003 the practice had resumed with a vengeance. One reason dynamite fishing is rampant is that explosives come cheap and easily accessible to fishermen.

Bombs are usually sourced from mining, demolition and road construction enterprises or made at home from fertiliser and diesel. The result is that large amounts of fish and their eggs are destroyed, thus leaving no prospects of fish stocks increasing. One blast can lead to a catch of up to 400kg of fish and a profit of US\$1,800 in market sales, a lucrative short-term profit despite the long-term destruction left behind.

It seems efforts to solve the problem of dynamite fishing will be with us for a long time indeed, unless more serious measures are taken to bring it to an end. Last weekend the Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF) offered to give more support in effort to end dynamite fishing. In offering to bring to an end to this menace, the TPDF is carrying out the noble duty of preserving the environment. That is what any people oriented military should be doing in times of peace. As they say, the military it is not just about war; is also about protecting the people and their heritage.

Military steps in to combat dynamite fishing

10 April 2011, By Lucas Liganga, The Citizen Chief Reporter

Following reports of rampant dynamite fishing off the Dar es Salaam coast, the Tanzania People's Defence Forces (TPDF) has offered to patrol the area, The Citizen has learnt. The Temeke district commissioner, Ms Chiku Galawa, said yesterday the TPDF offered to patrol the sea, during a meeting of the Dar es Salaam region's defence and security committee meeting last week. "Since TPDF is a member of the regional defence and security committee, it offered to assist in patrolling the Dar es Salaam waters during the meeting," she said in a telephone interview. Ms Galawa said the Temeke District authorities would, beginning today, also launch sea patrols to last one week with a view to identifying areas notorious for dynamite fishing.

"We've realised that some local government authorities are a major hindrance in the fight against dynamite fishing because they collude with the dynamiters," said the DC. "Our patrols are intended to identify weak points, that is, areas that are notorious for dynamite fishing, and see how we can organise ourselves to arrest the

situation," she said.

Reached by phone in Dodoma for comment, the Minister for Livestock Development and Fisheries, Mr David Mathayo, said: "I'm aware dynamite fishing is a serious problem. But I've a message to the dynamiters: their days are numbered!" Mr Mathayo said the government will very soon conduct a special operation on the country's Indian Ocean waters, from Mtwara, Tanga to Dar es Salaam with the express purpose to catch dynamiters. "We're about to launch a 45-day special operation in Lake Victoria, after which we'll move to the Indian Ocean," he said, declining to give details, on the ground that doing so would amount to alerting the culprits.

The minister said the dynamiters were so thoughtless they blast even the ecologically fragile and protected areas, which are the breeding grounds for fish. Following a survey by this newspaper revealing widespread dynamite fishing, acting Dar es Salaam regional commissioner Said Meck Sadick last week promised to discuss the matter during a meeting of the defence and security committee which he chairs.

The Citizen survey further revealed that dynamite fishing along the Dar es Salaam coastal areas resurfaced, after a respite in the wake of former Livestock and Fisheries minister John Magufuli's clampdown on the practice in 2009 and 2010. "Dynamite fishing is harmful to people because some remnants of chemicals used to make the bombs are toxic," said the RC, adding: "Dynamite fishing is also dangerous to marine life, including coral reefs that are breeding grounds for fish. We shall not entertain this malpractice."

The survey by this newspaper established that dynamite fishing continues unabated in the coastal villages of Ngobanya, Kizito, Mbutu and Puna in Kimbiji Ward. Ngobanya Village executive officer Kolela Magai admitted during an interview on Monday that hardly a day passes without one hearing dynamite blasts in the sea. "Those involved are sometimes arrested, but you soon see them back in business after a short while," said Mr Magai, adding that the destructive practice was difficult because the perpetrators were politically well connected.

Kizito Village chairman Rajab Bakari also admitted that incidents of dynamite fishing in his area were common because fighting the vice called for a "good chain of defence and security command." Although illegal and highly dangerous, dynamite fishing continues in most of the Tanzanian seawaters, especially off Tanga, Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, Mafia, Rufiji, Kilwa and Zanzibar, particularly Pemba. Activists have warned that if no immediate action is taken, dynamite fishing might usher in serious consequences in a number of areas, including marine environment and tourism.

Rising dynamite fishing cases amid diminishing returns

Daily News, By Correspondent DEODATUS MFUGALE, 5th April 2011

EVEN for a habitual "dynamite fisher" like Adam Khatib, landing a catch of five kilos from a day's work is embarrassing and humiliating, to say the least. One could easily read the message on his face as he disembarked from his canoe. And this, the low catch of five or less small fish caught through illegal dynamite fishing, is not an isolated case. It has become common in recent years, a sure indication that dynamite fishing is no longer the cash cow that used to be in yesteryears.

Yet cases of dynamite fishing in Tanga Region are on the rise although the amount of fish landed from this illegal method is becoming smaller, especially among the case of small-scale fishers. "Between 2006 and 2007, we recorded an average of 69 dynamite blasts per month. Between 2008 and 2009 there were eight blasts per month and only three blasts per month were recorded between 2009 and the last three quarters of 2010. However the situation has changed and we have recorded 18 blasts per month during the last quarter of 2010 up to February this year," explains Silvester Givver, District Fisheries Officer for Mkinga District in Tanga region.

He was speaking to a group of journalists from the Journalists Environmental Association of Tanzania (JET) about the problem of dynamite fishing in Tanga Region and indeed in the whole of Tanzania's Indian Ocean coast. It is a serious one and there seems to be no lasting solution in sight. Various authorities and institutions have taken measures in a bid to end the crime but none has provided a lasting solution to the problem.

"At the time when the rate of dynamiting was low, we used to conduct 14 patrols a month. But we could not maintain the trend because we ran short of funds. Now we are conducting only one patrol a month and this shortcoming is reflected by the rising number of dynamiting incidences recorded in the last six months," Givver told the journalists.

Selemani Hussein Kapera who is the chairman of Mwambani Village Environmental committee concedes that incidences of dynamite fishing have gone up. "We hear between 10 and 15 blasts

everyday.

This is for Mwambani alone but there are similar cases in Sahare, Mwarongo and other villages. However, there is a significant reduction in the size of the catch. When the navy used to patrol the sea, which was between 2000 and 2004, fishermen used to catch plenty of fish but once the navy was relieved of this responsibility, dynamite fishing has escalated while the size of the catch has become smaller over the years,” he says.

He adds:” Between 2000 and 2004, a fisherman would spend a few hours at sea and get about 300kgs of fish. Now they spend the whole day there and come back with as low as five kilograms of fish; It is terrible! If this goes on for the next five years, there will be no more fish left.”

According to Kapera, the community in collaboration with the fisheries authorities in the district had set aside no-take areas where fishing was not allowed because such areas were breeding sites. They included Jambe Island. However, efforts to protect these areas have been abandoned due to lack of funds “and commitment from other stakeholders such as staff from the fisheries department and the police.”

Omar Bushiri of Tongoni Village in Tanga also concedes that dynamite fishing has become uneconomic. He told the journalists that the village was at one time a hotspot of dynamite fishing with fishermen always landing a big catch. But things have changed over the years.”

Some fisherman here still engaged in dynamite fishing but I think it is out of habit and lack of an alternative source of income. The catch they land is not even enough to feed their families,” he says, adding that some young men have abandoned fishing and left the village altogether to try their hand in other activities elsewhere.

Adam Khatib, a resident of Tongoni village, has been fishing for over ten years most of which he has spent in dynamite fishing. Although he does not admit to engage in dynamite fishing, it is an open secret in the village that he is involved in the crime. However, he told the journalist that dynamite fishing is no longer the cash-cow that used to be and those who still engage in it are doing it out of habit rather than for economic gains.

“I think there is no more fish left around here. It doesn’t make sense for one to spend the whole day at sea and come back with only a handful of fish. Even those who use legal fishing methods are not better off; they always land a very small catch,” he explained.

Mwarongo is one of the villages that are famous for dynamite fishing. The village chairman, Mussa Mohamed Amir, says that dynamite fishing can no longer make ends meet for those who engage in it. “Yes, people still engage in dynamite fishing but they are doing it for lack of a better alternative source of income. Gone are the days when dynamite fishers used to land big catches that made them rich. Nowadays they end up getting a few kilogrammes of fish which are not enough for their families,” he explains.

Amir says that some people have abandoned dynamite fishing and gone for legal fishing methods but they had had little success because the illegal fishing method has also been affected the availability of fish. “There are those who are now engaging in other activities, but it will take sometime before they are able to realise any gains,” he said.

Questions linger as to why dynamite fishing is still common among coastal communities when it is no longer economic. Many villagers interviewed said that people continue to do it for lack of a better source of income and out of habit. When one earns a small income but cannot get an alternative source that would see him improving their lives, a wise decision would be to stick to the current job. Something is better than nothing, so the saying goes.

Yet insiders in the fishing industry say that dynamite fishing is only uneconomic to the small-scale fishermen, but for those who use engine-powered boats and appropriate equipment; those who can fish in the deep sea, going over 50 kilometres into the sea and targeting schools of tuna, the business is still very lucrative.

Issues of economics apart, stakeholders have advanced various reasons to explain why dynamite

fishing has become an age-old problem whose solution lies nowhere in sight.

“I think government officials charged with the responsibility to stamp out dynamite fishing are not honest. And here I am talking about some officials in the fisheries department and the police who plan the patrols and actually take part in them – some of these people demand bribes from dynamite fishers to let them continue with the illegal fishing. They also sell information to the criminals for personal gains, with the result that very often the patrols don’t catch anyone,” explains Amir.

He says that it was surprising to hear dynamite blasts almost everyday but the criminals would stay home and the sea would be silent on the days officials conduct patrols. Somehow the criminals can tell when it is safe and when it is not safe to go out dynamiting. “Government officials have lost credibility and the communities have become uncooperative in this issue for their own safety,” he added.

Legislation governing fisheries has also been cited as one of the bottlenecks in dealing with dynamite fishing. Various people interviewed were of the view that the Fisheries Act, 2003 no longer responds to current needs because it prescribes light sentences to offenders and it should thus be amended.

“If a law does not instill fear among the general public, if people have no respect for such a law then it should be amended. One wonders why the law sets free even offenders who are caught with damning evidence – is it because the law is weak or is it because the judiciary is corrupt?” asked Abdi Yahaya of Mwambani Village.

His views were echoed by Omar Bushiri of Tongoni village who said that the judiciary was not serious in dealing with dynamite fishers because most of those found guilty escape with light sentences and so go back to commit the same offenses.

The small capital required to engage in dynamite fishing has also fueled the crime. Those well-versed with the industry say that one needs only 5,000/- to get started, this being the price of one piece of dynamite stick. With such little money, many youths can start the business and sustain it.

According to some sources, things are made easier by the fact that small scale dynamiters don’t need canoes or boats in their work; they simply swim in the sea, throw the lit dynamite stick in the identified area and collect the fish which they tie to a rope. This has made dynamite fishing “anyone’s” job.

The leniency of the government and the “noise” made human rights activist have also helped to sustain dynamite fishing in Tanga Region. Whenever offenders are dealt with a heavy hand, activists argue that authorities are more concerned with protecting fish than human beings.

“There is a lot of politicking here. In Kenya, a person found in illegal possession of dynamite or engages in dynamite fishing is shot dead. Mozambique has a similar regulation and in both these countries, illegal possession of dynamite is treason. But here, no one really cares who possess dynamite and for what purpose. This laxity is costing us a lot,” explains Sylvester Givver, Mkinga District Fisheries Officer.

He adds that weak enforcement system where by those found guilty escape with light sentences only fuels the crime. According to the fisheries officer the situation is further complicated by the fact that dynamite fishers have formed their own association that helps culprits to pay fines or deal with the police and the magistrates by bribing them so as to be set free.

“There is a habitual dynamite fisher who has been taken to court for at least nine clear-cut cases for being caught with dynamited fish and for actually engaging in dynamite fishing. The evidence in all these cases has been unquestionable but he has not been found guilty in many of them and he is likely also not to be found guilty in the remaining few. This shows how strong their network is,” he says.

Mussa Dengo, Tanga City Fisheries Officer puts the blame squarely on the government. He argues that so far there is no clear strategy on sustainable management of the country’s fisheries. “The fisheries sector contributes about three percent to the country’s economy and 13 percent to the country’s foreign earnings; but how much of this is ploughed back to improve the management of fisheries?” he asks.

He says that effective surveillance and protection of the country's fisheries has not been possible due to lack of resources but this would not be a problem if there was an elaborate system to re-invest some of the sector's earnings for this purpose. "It would appear that dynamite fishers are above the law, they cannot be dealt with. Yet the truth is that the government has not put its foot on this problem," he noted.

Health danger in Dar over dynamite fishing

05 April 2011, By Lucas Liganga, The Citizen Chief Reporter

Dar es Salaam. The health of thousands of Dar es Salaam residents is in jeopardy due to dynamite fishing, The Citizen has learnt. Such is the extent of dynamite fishing along the city's coast that the issue will today be on the agenda of the region's defence and security committee meeting. The acting Dar es Salaam regional commissioner and chairman of the regional defence and security committee, Mr Said Meck Sadick, said yesterday that dynamite fishing would be discussed at length during the meeting with a view to ending the illegal practice once and for all.

Activists have warned that if no immediate action is taken to contain the situation, dynamite fishing might have disastrous consequences in a number of areas, including marine environment and tourism. Mr Sadick was reacting to a survey by The Citizen that has established that dynamite fishing is continuing unabated in the coastal villages of Ngobanya, Kizito, Mbutu and Puna in Kimbiji Ward. "Dynamite fishing is harmful to humans because some toxic remnants of chemicals used to make the bombs are not good to human health," said Mr Sadick during an interview adding: "Dynamite fishing is also dangerous to marine life, including coral reefs that are breeding grounds for fish. This malpractice will never be entertained."

Coral reefs are among the most critical marine resources in Tanzania as they support livelihoods for over eight million coastal people and are also an important source of income for the local and export-oriented fishing industry. A survey carried out by this newspaper has revealed that dynamite fishing along the Dar es Salaam coastal areas is becoming rampant again after former Livestock and Fisheries minister John Magufuli clamped down hard on the practice in 2009 and 2010.

Ngobanya Village executive officer Kolela Magai admitted during an interview on Monday that hardly a day passes without one hearing dynamite blasts in the sea. "Those involved are sometimes caught by relevant authorities, but you see them back in business after a short while," said Mr Magai, adding that fighting dynamite fishing was difficult because the perpetrators were politically well connected and protected.

Kizito Village chairman Rajab Bakari also admitted that incidents of dynamite fishing in his area were common because fighting the vice called for a "good chain of defence and security command. "Although illegal and highly dangerous, dynamite fishing continues to be practised along most of the Tanzanian coast, including Tanga, Bagamoyo, Dar es Salaam, Mafia, Rufiji, Kilwa and Zanzibar, particularly Pemba.

Sea Sense, a community-based, Tanzanian, non-governmental organisation set up in 2001 to help coastal communities protect and conserve endangered marine species and habitats, says dynamite fishing is highly destructive and the long-term effects are considerable, both environmentally and socio-economically. The organisation says it recorded 1,120 dynamite blasts in 2008 in Temeke District and some other parts of Dar es Salaam.

Dynamite fishing could also discourage tourists who pay a lot of money for snorkelling or diving in healthy coral reefs because dead reefs lose all their attraction. The Citizen has learnt that the sources of dynamite are cement factories, road building projects, mining areas and the security forces.

A study on the impact of dynamite fishing in the Kinondoni Integrated Coastal Area Management Project (KICAMP) localities reveals that the damage caused to reefs by dynamite goes beyond the shattering impact of the explosion itself. The study jointly done by Chikambi Rumisha, a marine scientist with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and Dr Christopher Muhando, a marine ecologist and lecturer with the Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS) of the University of Dar es Salaam in Zanzibar, says after a blast, algal growth quickly smothers the coral because the shoals of grazing fish that would normally keep it under control have been decimated.

The study focused on the localities of Mbweni, Ununio and Kunduchi as well as the offshore islands of Mbudya, Fungu Yasin, Bongoyo, Pangavini Marine Reserves and fishing grounds in the vicinity. Specific interest was also given to fringing reefs along Ras Kiromoni at Ununio and Malindi coast, Fungu Mkadya, Mbudya patches, Mwenvua, Dute, Dambwe, Mwamba Mrefu, Taa kubwa and Taa ndogo, and Kitapumbe reefs.

Tanzania: Scores of Fishermen Surrender Banned Gear to Marine Park

Abdallah Bakari, 20.2.2011 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201102210173.html>

Mtwara — A total of 53 fishermen from four villages in Mtwara District have surrendered their banned fishing tools to Mnazi Bay Marine Park in support of the government drive to curb illegal fishing. Fishermen from Mngoji, Mnete, Naringu and Msangamkuu villages said they have decided to abandon the practice of using illegal tools after being educated on the bad effects of the practice by park officials

Mtwara district commissioner Elaston Mbwilo, told The Citizen over the weekend that relentless efforts to educate fishermen have resulted into awareness which has prompted some of them to surrender their tools. Mr Mbwilo, who is also the chairman of the regional prevention and control of illegal fishing committee, said the fishermen surrendered the illegal fishing gear last month.

He said the situation has improved compared to two years ago due to the education offered to the fishermen about the adverse effects of illegal tools in fishing, along with empowering groups to obtain legal fishing gear. "I urge park officials to put more emphasis on educating the public, last the use of force should be the next step if the fishermen ignore the advice ... we should understand that it will take time for them (fishermen) to abandon tools they have been using for years," he said.

The DC said in a period of three weeks in Nalingu, village seven people were detained for investigation after the seizure of illegal fishing gear. But they were released after naming the owners. Mr Mbwilo has urged other fishermen to surrender their illegal fishing tools as no legal action will be taken against them, but those who would be arrested in a special swoop would be charged. According to the acting park chief executor, Mr Redfred Ngowo, during the past five years of implementing the park management programme, people still use dynamite for fishing.

Can TZ win illegal fishing war alone?

The Citizen, 10 January 2011, BY George Sembony, The Citizen Correspondent

Tanga. Dynamite fishing was successfully controlled, almost to zero level, when the Irish government supported the Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development Programme (TCZCDP). However, when it ended in 2006, dynamite fishing erupted with vengeance. Suddenly reported dynamite blasts shot up from almost zero to 69 blasts per month in the following year (2007). This is until another donor showed up in the form of the World Bank-financed Tanzania Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project (MACEMP).

The project which was aimed at strengthening the sustainable management and use of the Borrower's Exclusive Economic Zone, territorial seas, and coastal resources - resulting in enhanced revenue collection - reduced threats to the environment, improved livelihoods for participating coastal communities living in the coastal districts, and improved institutional capabilities.

It had allocated a budget of \$60,000 per year for illegal fishing control activities, including patrols.

However, as the project draws to a close next year, the budget has dwindled to \$10,000 per year, with dire consequences that resemble the same phenomenon of 2007 when the TCZCDP came to an end in 2006.

According to the Mkinga district fisheries officer, Mr Sylvester Givver, dynamite fishing incidents have shot up sharply again to 19 dynamite blasts per month in 2010, from just about four per month in 2009/10. He attributed the trend to reduced funding by MACEMP

od days, “between two to three patrols were being conducted per week in 2008/09, resulting in reduced dynamite blasts from 69 per month in 2006/07, to eight in 2008/09 and three in 2009/10,” he told members of the a delegation of journalists studying the impact of the features and stories written under the Tanzania Media Fund (TMF) in the two districts. The delegation was led by the TMF Programme Officer, Raziah Mwawanga. “Unfortunately, MACEMP is coming to an end and funding has dwindled to an allocation of \$ 10,000 per year, leading to a situation where there is only one patrol per month and resulting to increased blasts to 19 per month,” Mr Givver said.

The control trend shows that dynamite fishing seems to remain under control during donor-funded programmes. For instance, the vice had been reduced to almost zero during the Irish government-supported Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development Programme (TCZCDP). “Immediately after the end of the TCZCDP in 2006, the number of dynamite blasts shot significantly in just one year (2007),’ he noted. ‘It looks like the dynamite users know that you do not have an ability to conduct patrols now,” he said.

The Pangani Fisheries officer, Mr Chitambo Kauta, said that Pangani was now being invaded by dynamite fishermen from Tanga City after enhanced control by the Muheza district based-Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park which occupies part of Tanga City and Muheza District at Kigombe. “MACEMP had been propping us and enabling us to conduct patrols but in October we had to conduct patrols on foot along the coast,” he said, adding that, “this is frustrating even to our informers who have now stopped informing us about dynamite fishers because they know we cannot make it to the invaded areas.”

A Phase 4 report by the TCZCDP showed that strategies were developed for district councils to internalise activities that were being implemented by the project, including financing illegal fishing control activities. A strategy developed and approved by all partners in December 2004 and which primarily focused on the handing over process of the management of the programme, from IUCN to the government of Tanzania, showed that considerable time was spent in ensuring that management responsibilities of the IUCN were properly handed over to the regional secretariat and the districts by March 31, 2005.

Three new patrol boats were ordered from U.A.E and each district received one Yamaha 27F fibreglass boats which would replace the smaller boats which were being used in patrol activities. Those patrol boats have been lying idle because of lack of fuel to run them. It has been revealed here that only one council, the Tanga City Council, has been allocating funds for patrol activities, but how frequent such activities were being undertaken is anybody’s guess.

Mr Givver says that protection of natural resources, including marine and coastal, has been accorded the right priority in planning in most local governments, a factor that has been supported by an environmental expert, Ms Melita Samoilys, from a marine NGO based in Kenya, Cordio East Africa.

Ms Samoilys said that experience was showing that Tanzania has not been able to mainstream the environment into its economic and development planning and poverty reduction strategies, despite experiences earned during several years of community-based conservation projects. “Many years after spending so much in community-based conservation projects, marine resources were still being destroyed,” she pointed out.

The environmental expert said that planners were talking about education and health but those have already been mainstreamed into economic and development planning and poverty reduction

strategies. "The government has given us guns but it has not given us bullets," Mr Kauta said sarcastically, elaborating that the government or the projects had given them patrol boats but that the equipment needed funds to run.

Another example of dependency on donor funded protection measures are the introduction of the Coelacanth Marine Reserve in Kigombe. The Kigombe village chairman, Mr Mumbi Haji, said that they have been relieved with the introduction of the reserve, noting that patrols being financed by the reserve were effective, pushing dynamite fishermen to south or north of Tanga, towards the boundary with Kenya.

The officers think that because marine and coastal resources are important to revenue collection in coastal districts, it would pay to accord them priority and reserve funds for protecting those resources to be beneficial to the district and its residents, instead befitting a few people who obliterate the resources.

The dynamite situation, according to Mr Obadia Ngogo - the officer in charge of the North-Eastern Zone of the Fisheries Surveillance Unit - is getting worse despite patrol efforts by the unit which is largely understaffed and under-financed.

Comments

O #1 daniel 2011-01-10. what is wrong with us, we Tanzanians? TELL ME, who bewitched us from time immemorial? It is totally nonsense to utilise our natural resources illegally as if we are all getting dead today. The way i see this blissful ignorance has been caused by weak policies and forensic drafts towards the menace by governments. WHO WILL YOU LEAD IF WE ALL DIE AS A RESULT OF POOR ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT? I AM ASKING YOU WAHESHIMIWA.

'Courts fail to stop bad fishing'

09 January 2011, By Abdallah Bakari, The Citizen Correspondent

Mtwara. The village leaders and members of environment conservation committee in Mnazi Bay and the Ruvuma Marine Park, have requested the government to allow them to punish people suspected to engage in illegal fishing in the marine park. Village chairmen, executive officers and members of village environment conservation committees, said they had reached that decision after the courts failed to convict and punish the suspects.

The leaders raised their concern during a meeting that discussed the new programme for the marine park management. They claimed that despite arresting the suspects often in possession of illegal fishing tools, the courts acquitted them for lack of evidence. "Illegal fishing can be stopped if the culprits are severely punished," said Mr Abiola Mtalika, a member of the committee on environment conservation in Nalingu village

State attorney in Mtwara Zone Renatus Mkude opposed the idea, saying under the rule of law "We can not grab the court's authority by allowing people to practice jungle justice." He said their proposal was not correct under the law. Mtwara district commissioner Elaston Mbwilllo, who was the guest of honour during the opening of the meeting, warned the leaders against taking the law unto their hands, instead they should appear in courts to testify against the suspects. "If you don't go to courts and testify, how do you expect the courts to convict the suspects. Let's cooperate with the magistrates to curb the problem," said Mr Mbwilllo

Earlier, the marine park conservator, Mr Redfred Ngowo, said during the past five years, there were many cases of illegal fishing using dynamite. "Over the last five years, the park management donated fishing equipment to 556 fish men worth Sh181.6 million in a bid to reduce the use of illegal fishing tools, but the problem still persists," said Mr Ngowo He said the park is surrounded by 17 villages whose residents were dependent on its marine resources for their livelihood.

Dynamite fishing reported thriving in Tanga Region

The Citizen, 01 January 2011, By George Sembony

Tanga. Heavy reliance on donor support for control of illegal fishing including dynamite fishing and the inability of local councils to finance control measures, have been cited as major setbacks to control use of dynamite in fishing in Pangani and Mkinga districts. Fisheries officers from the two districts have said control trends during

the past decade indicate that dynamite fishing often re-emerges with a vengeance soon after donor funded projects wind up.

According to Mkinga Fisheries Officer Sylvester Givver, dynamite fishing incidents have shot up sharply to 19 dynamite blasts per month in 2010 from about four per month in 2009/10. He attributed the trend to reduced funding by the World Bank funded Marine and Coastal Environment Management Programme (MACEMP). Under the programme, funding a budget of \$60,000 per year was allocated to patrols resulting in reduced dynamite blasts from 69 per month in 2007/07 to eight in 2008/09 and three in 2009/10. "Unfortunately, MACEMP is coming to an end and funding has dwindled to an allocation of \$ 10,000 per year, leading to a situation where there is only on patrol per month resulting increased blasts to 19 per month," Mr Givver said.

The control trend shows that dynamite fishing seems to remain under control during donor funded programmes, saying for instance that the vice had been reduced to almost zero during the Irish government supported Tanga Coastal Zone Conservation and Development Programme (TCZCDP). "Immediately after the end of the TCZCDP in 2006, the number of dynamite blasts rose from almost zero to 69 in a year (2007)," he said. His Pangani counterpart, Mr Chitambo Kkauta, said Pangani has now being invaded by dynamite fishermen from the Tanga City after enhanced control by the Muheza District based-Tanga Coelacanth Marine Park which occupies part of Tanga City and Muheza district at Kigombe.

Dynamite fishing continues unabated in Tumbatu

From DAILY NEWS Reporter in Zanzibar, 26th July 2010

EFFORTS to conserve environment which include prohibiting illegal fishing methods seem to have failed as the use of dynamite at Mwana-wa-mwana area, Tumbatu Island goes on unabated, killing young fish and destroying coral reefs, it has been revealed. Mr Mussa Jumbe, Director in the Department of Fisheries and Sea Resources in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Environment said here on Monday a recent incident of dynamite fishing occurred last Tuesday near Tumbatu Island, north of Unguja Island. "Approximately over a tonne of fish have been killed and their breeding places (Coral reefs) destroyed in the act. This is bad, we will hunt down the offenders," Mr Jumbe said at meeting convened for leaders of 'village fishing committees' in Unguja North.

He noted that fish stocks were at the risk of being depleted if fishermen continued using dynamite, warning that his department would spare no efforts in hunting down illegal fishermen. Ms Riziki Simai, District Commissioner (DC) for Unguja North A, condemned the use of dynamite, urging members of the community around Tumbatu island to help the government in identifying people still using unaccepted fishing methods.

However, Mr Mohamed Omar, administrative officer in Tumbatu Island raised concern about what he termed as loose security around the islands, alleging that foreign fishermen were to blame for the July 20, 2010 dynamite fishing. "I think the incident was not carried out by Zanzibaris living on Tumbatu Islands, foreigners are the suspects. People in Zanzibar should be blamed for not providing information to the law-enforcers when they see suspicious people and movements in the sea," Omar argued.

Marine and Coastal Environment Management Project (MACEMP) supported by the World Bank seeks to help conserve coastal ecosystems, encourage good governance of resources, fight poverty among communities which for long had been blamed for degradation of marine and coastal environments. Under the project, several coastal communities have benefited from funds disbursed by MACEMP in loans, grants, working equipment such as fishnets, boats, aquaculture dams and training in micro-entrepreneurship since the beginning of the project.

Report: Leaders frustrate efforts against illegal fishing

The Citizen, 7.11.09, By George Sembony, Tanga

Interference by politicians and government officials is said to hinder efforts to combat illegal fishing in Tanga Region. This was revealed here recently in a report of the Tanga-based northeastern zone fisheries patrol unit. It quoted the head of the unit, Mr Hyasint Donald Wariro, as saying interference from politicians and senior Government officials in Pangani and Tanga districts forced them to abandon patrols to apprehend illegal fishermen along the

Tanga coast. According to the report, Tanga and Pangani district commissioners ordered the unit to stop conducting the patrols temporarily to avoid disturbing voters during the recent civic elections.

This is not the first time the patrol unit leader has complained about interference by politicians and government leaders effectively frustrating the exercise to net illegal fishermen. He mentioned politicians involved in frustrating their efforts as including members of parliament and councillors. "Location and village chairpersons are not interested in curbing the practice because the illegal operations always start from their areas," he said. He also mentioned the Judiciary as playing part in frustrating efforts in the exercise. Mr Wariro said there have been cases of lost case files before or soon after witnesses had given evidence in courts. He also mentioned leakages of details of operations before embarking on them as other factors frustrating their operations. A total of 13 illegal fishermen have been fined Sh1.1 million and ordered to get licenses after pleading guilty to illegal fishing this month.

In addition, two boats were impounded in the operation. Meanwhile, a suspect, one Mr Mustapha Wadhari, and his two accomplices escaped arrest on October 6 this year when their boat was seized during the operation. In addition, the police impounded two other boats.

Dynamite fishing rampant despite legislations

By Daniel Ondigo, 1st November 2009

Magogoni Fish Market in Dar es Salaam, which had been intended to serve 1,000 traders and fishermen, now caters for as many as 15,000 people due to increased fishing related activities.

This is despite the ongoing government's efforts to control the practice through legislations like Act No. 22 of 2003 and fisheries regulations passed in 2005. According to Magogoni Market Fisheries Officer Fidelis Mtima, the measures have helped scale down dynamite fishing. However, he added that more efforts are needed to stop the illegal practice. Unlike fish trapped through normal methods like line fishing, netting and angling, blast or dynamite fishing involves using explosives to stun or kill schools of fish for easy collection.

The practice is extremely destructive to the surrounding ecosystem, as the explosion destroys the underlying habitat (such as coral reefs) that supports the fish. Although outlawed, the practice remains widespread and kills fish which are not ready for harvesting. The frequently improvised nature of the explosives also poses danger for the fishermen's lives as well. The lure of lucrative, easy catches; and in some cases outright apathy or corruption on the part of local officials make enforcement of blast fishing bans a challenge for authorities.

Mtima said plans were underway to engage a patrol police officer in Dar es Salaam in conjunction with fishermen in extensive day and night patrols to unearth the vice. dynamites are usually bombs made locally, using glass bottles with layers of powdered potassium nitrate and pebbles or ammonium nitrate and kerosene mixture. Underwater shockwaves produced by the explosion causes the fish's swim bladder to rupture; stunning them. A small number of fish float to the surface, but most sink to the sea floor.

Apart from the dynamite fishing, fishermen and traders at Magogoni market are danger of contracting disease owing to unhygienic conditions of their surroundings. The market

initially meant for 1,000 traders and fishermen is now struggling to contain 15,000 local and foreign entrepreneurs. GUARDIAN ON SUNDAY

'Dynamite fish' easy to recognise

Daily News, JAFFAR MJASIRI, 24th October 2009

IT is quite easy to identify fish killed by explosives because their spinal codes and intestines are ruptured in the process, experts say. "Auctioneers at the Ferry Fish Market are trained to identify 'dynamite fish.' We have awareness campaigns conducted in the market from time to time," Ilala Municipal Council Fisheries Officer, Mr Fidelis Ntima said. Mr Ntima said the use of explosives in the Indian Ocean has had far reaching consequences, as it has destroyed coral reefs around 10 kilometres of the sea shores.

The Fisheries Act of 2003 and the Fisheries Regulations of 2005 prohibit any person to use dynamites in fishing or any other accessories supporting such activities. "We are fighting a battle with fishermen who engaged in illegal fishing whose aim is to make money no matter what," he said. "Now that such fishermen have destroyed the large portion of coral reefs where fish get food, shelter and breeding ground, the artisanal fishermen cannot find any catches given that they are using poor rafts and gear that cannot reach the deep seas," he said with concern.

He explained that their dug out canoes cannot stand the strong winds and turbulence in high seas and as a result most of them end up with very little catch that cannot sustain their lives. Abdul Salum said most of his colleagues who work in the fish market have realized that fighting dynamite fishing was of paramount importance for the survival of the industry. "I am ready to report to the authorities any person who uses explosives," he said.

The Ilala episode is just a tip of the ice-berg of dynamite fish catch finding its way into the market. There are so many spots in the city that receive similar supplies and the authorities have continued its cracking. Meanwhile the government has banned the use of gas jars, swimming goggles and swimming flippers which are used for dynamite operations. "Those instruments are used by fishermen while diving deep in the waters to collect fish that have been blasted," Mr Ntima explained.

The Central Police in Dar es Salaam in collaboration with fisheries officers and fishing group leaders successfully cracked down on illegal fishermen at the Ferry Market recently and confiscated various items which were ready to be deployed for illegal fishing. These items confiscated, he said, included 18 pairs of swimming flippers, 14 swimming safety goggles, 51 refilled cylinder jars and 41 litres of petrol. However, the fisheries department, in collaboration with the police authorities has succeeded to prosecute only 6 dynamite users in the past three years.

Dynamite fishing: Who is behind it?

http://www.illegal-fishing.info/item_single.php?item=news&item_id=2366&approach_id=17
16/12/2007, IPP Media

Hand grenades and bombs once exclusive weapons for the military are now applied to marine life as a way of getting bumper fish catch. Although 110 people in the country lose their lives every year due to the illegal fishing method, more and more fishermen are attracted to the seeming money minter when only 20 percent of the dynamited fish is picked with the rest

being wasted into the sea. The illegal practice is now widespread along the whole of the Indian Ocean coast from Tanga region down to Mtwara region with main spots being in Tanga region.

Notorious areas for the crime are Kigombe, Mwambani and Karange in Tanga region which between July and November this year recorded blasts every five to ten minutes while Dege, Sindandogo and Bamba in Temeke and Mkuranga districts in Dar es Salaam reported 146 blasts during the same period.

Njao Gap and Manta Reef in Pemba have also been cited as areas where dynamite fishing is being practised with 54 blasts having been reported between July and November this year.

The illegal practice puts Tanzania in an awkward light, being the only country along the Indian Ocean coast that has failed to wipe out the crime. Neighbours Kenya, Mozambique, Seychelles, Comoro, Mauritius have all succeeded in stopping the illegal practice and look at Tanzania as the odd one out for failing to deal with the vice.

"The problem has now grown out of proportion as the criminals now use more sophisticated bombs which are used by the army. Some of these are also used in blowing up buildings, bridges and safes. We need to come up with a strategy that will enable us to deal with the criminals squarely," explained the Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism Prof. Jumane Maghembe at a meeting held in Bagamoyo recently.

The meeting which was financed by the British High Commission in Tanzania drew participants from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Ministry of Public Safety and Security, Tanzanian People's Defense Forces, WWF, regional commissioners from coastal regions and the International Union of Conservation, among others. He explained that the illegal practice has flourished recently because the criminals make handsome money from the illegal business.

There are reports that dynamite for one blast is sold at between 6,000/= and 7,000/= which can kill between 150 kilogrammes and 400 kilogrammes of fish, sold at a price ranging from 3,000/= to 4,000/= per kilogramme. "The criminals thus make between 500,000/= and 2,000,000/= and bearing in mind that a group of fishermen can undertake ten blasts a day, dynamite fishing has become a lucrative business," the Minister noted. Yet fishermen who use dynamite also risk their lives. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, about 110 people lose their lives every year due to dynamite fishing but the greed for big money spurs them on.

However, while the fishermen make good money out of the illegal business, the country incurs heavy loss in term of environmental destruction and loss of revenue. Dynamite fishing destroys coral reefs which are breeding grounds for fish and other marine life. Once a reef is destroyed by dynamite, it will take close to a century before a new one is formed and this is if all other things remain the same. "But generally once a reef is dynamited, it will never come back," explained Philip Parham, British High Commissioner, during the meeting.

There is also the threat to marine based tourism which has just begun to pick up. Investments are being made in snorkeling and scuba diving which are high value tourism that could have a positive impact on the economy of coastal communities in both the Mainland and Zanzibar. According to the Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors, coastal tourism accounts for up

to 22 percent of Zanzibar's GDP and 17 percent for the Mainland. Marine based tourism also accounts for approximately 77 percent of Zanzibar's Foreign Direct Investment (DFI) which translates to about 139.555 million US dollars. "If we allow dynamite to continue, we are likely to lose 100 million US dollars a year; 138,000 jobs will be at stake and 150 million US dollars spending by foreign visitors will be lost. "This is to say the least about 80 million US dollars capital expenditure that we will have to forfeit", explained Julia Bishop, the Director of Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors. She added that while Tanzania is not taking measures to nurture her marine based tourism; other countries are protecting their resources and exploiting the full potential of their coastal tourism.

Small fishermen suffer

Law-abiding small scale fishermen also suffer from dynamite fishing as the illegal fishing method kills indiscriminately, leading to reduced fish catches. With their livelihoods threatened, there is no way these families can lift themselves out of poverty. Besides, dynamiting of school of fish and pelagic fish, is a waste of resources because only about 20 percent of the dynamited fish is picked by the fishermen while the rest sinks into the sea. However, with reef dynamiting, the fishermen can pick between 60 and 70 percent of the fish. Due to continued harassment from the blasts, eventually the fish move away in search of better feeding grounds. This reduces catches for small scale fishermen and many of them are already complaining about poor catches.

Even with the current state of affairs, various people have not lost hope and are taking measures to fight the crime. The Zanzibar Association of Tourism, Sea Sense and Sea Products Ltd are monitoring how the illegal fishing is conducted and recording the number of blasts everyday, in the hope that the information will help to highlight the magnitude of the problem and guide authorities in deciding what action should be taken against the criminals. Sea Products Ltd is spearheading the monitoring in Tanga region, Zanzibar Association of Tourism Investors mainly monitors the situation in Zanzibar and Pemba and Sea Sense is currently working in eight districts including Temeke and Mkuranga districts although the organizations share the information between them. "In response to the escalating problem of dynamite fishing particularly in Temeke and Mkuranga Districts, we initiated meetings with village leaders from 12 villages in July this year to discuss the issue of dynamite fishing. We requested them to participate in monitoring blasts and they all agreed," explained an official from the NGO.

The action taken by Sea Sense is in line with the thinking of the British High Commissioner who said during the meeting that community involvement can play a crucial role in fighting dynamite fishing because it destroys their livelihoods. "But they need to know who to call with information about blasts or about people planning to use dynamite for fishing. And they need to be confident that their information will be acted on, "he cautioned.

Illegal and unregulated fishing still headache to authorities

<http://www.ippmedia.com/cgi-bin/ipp/search.pl?string=dynamite+fishing>

Links there:

Unregulated and illegal fishing practices on Tanzania's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are still rampant despite strenuous efforts by the government to stop continuity... ..

Tanzania to curb illegal fishing

Tanzania is reported to be losing a fortune to illegal fishing every year and European Union

sources estimate that some 70 ships are operating illegally, targeting tuna, kingfish, lobsters and prawns. ...

Marine scientists: Dynamite fishing at alarming level

Marine scientists have described the level of dynamite fishing as alarming and the main factor in coral reefs destruction in coastal areas in the country. ...

This open access will deplete our fisheries

Despite numerous efforts by the government, illegal fishing in our lakes and Indian Ocean coast waters has continued to be rampant and even intensified to the extent of threatening the existence of our fishery resources. ...

President Kikwete warns against illegal fishing

President Jakaya Kikwete has expressed concern over illegal fishing which, he said, is the main cause of fish shortage in both the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria. ...

Stop illegal fishing, Chake Chake DC warns

Zanzibar Director for Fisheries and Marine Resources, Mussa Aboud Jumbe has challenged authorities charged with the duty to control and monitor illegal fishing in Pemba Island. ...

Illegal fishing a big threat to Kilombero River breeding sites

The future of fish breeding in Kilombero River is in danger following rampant illegal fishing done by illegal seasonal fishermen, a survey conducted by this paper... ...

Needed: Swift move to restore order in our fishing industry

Available data shows that Tanzania's fishing industry is wallowing in great mess, thus limiting its potentiality to help the economy grow fast enough and alleviate poverty in the most meaningful manner. ...

Illegal fishing costs Africa 62bn/-

The scale of illegal fishing across Africa is now so serious that it is in danger of decimating stocks across the continent, a new report says. ...

Magufuli appeals for patriotism in curbing rampant illegal fishing

The minister for Livestock Development and Fisheries, John Magufuli, has urged fishermen to be more patriotic in the fight against illegal fishing practices. ...

Carrying on with the war against dynamite fishing

The East African coast is one of the richest areas in coastal and marine resources in the world with its unique oceanographic features and remarkable underwater canyons. ...

Dynamite fishing: Who is behind it?

Hand grenades and bombs once exclusive weapons for the military are now applied to marine life as a way of getting bumper fish catch....

What coral reefs are

Pollution, over fishing, and overuse of other oceanic resources have put many of our unique reefs at risk. Their disappearance would destroy the habitat of countless species. ...

`Politicians have interests in dynamite fishing in coastal regions`

Politicians in the country's coastal regions have been alleged to be behind increasing incidents of dynamite fishing. ...